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ZEKIEL'S HOMESPUN PHILOSOPHIES



Sarah Taylor Shatford



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ZEKIEL'S HOMESPUN PHILOSOPHIES

BY

SARAH TAYLOR SHATFORD

Author of "Birds of Passage," etc.

*There is a fence about the farm, but there is
no fence between the farm and the stars.*

GEORGE HODGES, D.D.



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SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
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ZEKIEL'S HOMESPUN PHILOSOPHIES

FIGGERED UP

Ain't no better off, as I can see,
Than when I fust begun!
I've worked an' slaved and toiled and saved;
Never have had any fun!

Ain't never been away from hum
No further than the gate!
I always longed to see the sights
They tell about up-state!

No; I've jus' worked an' worked an' worked,
An' saved up fur old age;
An' lived in this cove hamlet here,
Like a bird lives in a cage.

No, I ain't read so awful much,
Hired hands wuz always scarce;
An' when there's any farmin' on,
They're even pretty sparce!

Some days I set an' figger up
What's mine when all is done!
Ain't no better off as I can see
Than when I fust begun.

GERMITIS

“ So much fur germs! At last we know
The very bugs that eat, an’ grow,
An’ cause all human ills!
At last we know the germs that kill!
There’s only one or two to seek,
An’ each day now, some man may speak
An’ say they’re ketched at last.
Our scientists are not outclassed!”
Said Sorghum, at the country store,
While reading the “ News Topics ” o’er.

“ Yes, yes,” said Slickum, “ all that’s true;
But what gits me,— an’ must git you,—
Is people die on jus’ the same
As ’fore these bugs were called by name
By all these specialists in fame.

“ The coffin-business seems to thrive,
An’ men can no more keep alive
Than when yer grand-dad et his fill
Of all the stuff they say is swill,—
Frum coffee down to pickled-swine.
You’ll take yer chance? . . .

. . . Wal . . . I’ll take mine!”

SAVIN' UP

YES, Martin saved most everything
Both he an' his'n earned ;
They never drank a glass o' milk
That wasn't skimmed or churned !

The farmers came to thresh his grain,
For love of makin' hay !
He beat 'em down to the last cent ;
Then said it didn't pay !

When Ellen died from overwork,—
An' rested the first time
That ever was her own to take
Since weddin'-bells did chime,—

The neighbors said, " Yer wife was good,
An' sure was a help-meet."
Mart said, " If I'd had six like her,
I'd be up in Wall Street !"

A SILHOUETTE BRIDE

ARMANTHA in her silhouette
Walked slowly up the aisle,
An' gave the villagers a sight
To hold 'em fur awhile!

An' Uncle Abe, an' Cousin Sue,
Who come from Cricketsville
To 'tend the weddin' silhouette,
Are talkin' of it still!

Sue says, "I'll *never* tell her
She forgot her petticoat!
For how she'd feel, if she jus' knew
That folks could see her through-an'-through!
'Twould be a jarrin' note!"

An' Abe says, "Well, byhek, it's true.
I've spent a quarter, yes, an' two,—
An' didn't see as good a show
As 'Mantha's silhouette, yo' know!"

PICKIN' WINNERS

You may bet upon yer games o' chance
An' stan' some chance to win;
You may figger on a dead sure cinch
An' cash yer tickets in!
But when it comes to pickin' out
The wimmin folk by rules,—
You'll have to reckon 'gainst such odds
As never taught in schools,
An' own the game's a losin' one:
Luck's only with the fools!

THE BUMMERS

THEY put three in the front bedroom,
An' two cots in the hall,
An' a settee in the parlor,
To make room fur 'em all.
An' ma she baked an' fussed all day,
A-makin' pies an' things
To feed the folks a visitin'
Us here at Cricket Springs!
They think of us the hul year through,
Longin' fur the summer
Food they get when visitin' us;
At cookin' ma's a hummer!

But this year I've been thinkin' some,
While feedin' these "in-laws!"

In winter time they never think
To speak to Santa Claus,
Nor fetch a gim-crack new for ma,
Who broiled fur them those summers.
I think I'll close the place next year,
An' we will jine the bummers!

MUTUAL

NOTHIN' in the world is half so helpful,
When you're run down at the heel an' feelin'
 blue,
As to hear your brother his distress a-tellin',
An' how he's always had his troubles, too!

It mayn't be so Christian-like a feelin',
This gladness that the other's got his own;
But when you're down and out it makes you
 happy
To know trouble don't trouble you alone!

I've never tried to figger out this feelin'
Of mutual hog-train knowledge in my breast;
— But when you're bent an' broke it makes yo'
 happy
To *know* you ain't no different from the rest!

STRAIGHT AHEAD

“WHAT’S your religion, Zeke?” says I.
“Have you some special creed you go by?
And have you jined to some denomination,
That keeps you straight,—from goin’ to dem-
nation?”

“Tom,” says he, “I’m no religionist,—I can’t
say as I be;
I keep a-drivin’ straight in the middle of the
road;
An’ makin’ headway, seems to me, when I look
back an’ see my load!
It’s allus ben the best that I could do.
While I’ve never rented a church pew,—
I’ve practiced, ‘Do to others as you would
they’d do to you.’
I jus’ keep drivin’ straight ahead in the middle
of the road;
An’ trust, when I reach ‘Kingdom Come,’
I’ll find there an abode.”

LOVE'S WINGS — ELASTIC

LAST year 'twas Phœbe;
Now 'tis Maud.
Next year 'twill be some other!
For twelve months is the longest time
That Jack can stand a tether!

“ ‘ Variety’s the spice of life,’
And tastes change so, by Jove!
You can’t exactly swear next year
This time, you’ll be in love.”

Phœbe squirmed to break away;
Maud says life is a bore;
So make the contract read, dear Judge,
“ For thirty days or more.”

ZEKIEL HOMESPUN

ZEKIEL HOMESPUN cum to town
To see the gals an' look aroun'.
He'd forty bucks when he'd sold the cow;
An' that's some money, we'll allow.
But Meaderville, it ain't Noo York,—
No more'n a cane is a pitchfork!
Zeke never seen Noo YORK before,
An' gettin' 'round was quite a chore,
So when night's curtain was flung down,
Zeke was the tiredest man in town!

It's not so strange he took a nap
Hangin' onto a subway strap;
Though wa'n't it wonderful to go
Under the ground on a railway so?
That was the last Zeke says he knew;
They found him where Coney zephyrs blew!
He don't remember a single thing
'Cept he'd made up his mind to have his fling
As he eyed two slazeys on the train,
Laughin', winkin,' an' laughin' again.
He don't want it told 'round Meaderville,
But those gals was undressed jus' fit to
kill. . . .

— He showed his roll an' yaller-back bill —
Then can't remember from that until
A cop braced him up 'gainst a winder-sill!
Yes-sir-ree. Zeke's honest as he can be!
Who got his roll? Wal, that gits me! . . .

FROM MISSOURI

“It don’t appear to me,” said J. Weed Tee,
“That the world an’ folks is any better than
they used-to-be.
Now just show me; fur I can’t see.
There ain’t no homes; there ain’t no marriage
like in olden days.
The world is richer? Yes, an’ poorer in so
many ways.
There ain’t no honors like they used-to-be;
There ain’t no *shame*. We used to reckon, in
my day, a name
Was worth more than a bank could hold;
Now-a-days, yer name’s summed-up with yer
gold.
There ain’t no modesty nor virtue if I see
The things a-stalkin’ in broad day I *think* I
see . . .
Now, I’m frum Missouri, . . . an’ you’ll have
to show me
Jus’ how, an’ where, all things is better than
they *used* to be.”

JIM

You spoke the word. That's true; there ain't
no truer.

Yes, Jim knows what it means here to be poor!
He's supped with poverty; so fur as this world
goes,

There ain't a wolf, or wolverine, but Jim, he
knows!

They've come nigh ketchin' him,— not once, but
twice,—

An' would have, but the neighbors fetched a
slice!

But man-alive, I'd gladly have helped him
Had I but knowed! . . . He never told.
That's Jim!

Yes, Jim *is* poor. But how many would change
Their worldly goods, if they jus' had Jim's
range

O' wisdom 'neath their hats? As fur his
heart,—

If I should speak o' that, the tears *would* start.
There ain't another man like Jim on this green
earth.

The angels and the cherubims were present at
Jim's birth!

You're wrong. They hain't forsook him
neither, here;

He's prophet, sage, an' poet! And a peer!

Gad, how I love that rusty coat o' Jim's.
Yes, *love it*; jus' because it *does* hold him!
I hope, if Jim goes fust, I'll see it there
A-waitin' fur me on the golden-stair,
Holdin' the same grand tenant it's held here.
To hell with all the folks that call Jim queer!

SCOTIA

“ My wife’s not hum. She’s gone to church.
At least she give me that excuse!
No, I don’t go! since war broke out,
Gol-durn-me, I can’t see the use.

I used to set through prayers an’ stunts
The war has proved ain’t done no good!
If God Almighty’s anywhere,
An’ you can prove it, wish you would.

I used to read the Bible through,
An’ ruminate on godless days;
But sence the war I’ve had no God:
I can’t see how it helps, nor pays.

My church to-day is right at hum;
I’ll do the very best I can;
But I don’t want no God fur mine,
The Germans claim is of their clan!”

OURN

JIMSON WEED TEE said canal tolls *should* be
free,

An' he argified fair, it rather struck me!
Says our land is held up as fair liberty,
An' gives all a hand, an' helps all to be
Independent an' free!

We should look on free tolls as mere charity;
He says we are greater than that country
That's fightin' to make the stream free;
An' we're agin' trusts, an' glad when they
busts,—
An' we can afford to *be* liberal, an' must!

Tee's some politician. He's lived in D. C. !
An' knows what he's sayin', now, jus' believe me.
But the thing I can't stan' for, nor can't under-
stand,
Is why we should need advice in our land
From any old country that's across the sea.
. . . Ain't what is ourn, ourn?
Wal, by heck, it *should* be!

SOMETHIN' TO RELATE

You see, this is another world,—
It's all so new to me,—
Fur I was born in Herkimer,
Down in the same county.
I feel the time's jus' wasted
That I spend away from hum;
There's so much there fur me to do
It worries me quite some.
But Jerushia asked me up here to spend the
 holidays;
She's way up in society, so I suppose it pays.
I'll surely have some thoughts to think
When I get back up state;
The doin's of society,—
They're somethin' to relate!
Jerushia likes the city life
With all its noise an' whirl;
You'd never guess she'd lived back hum,—
A regular Noo York girl!
Our Christmas dinner we all et
In the walled off Castoria;
I was humsick so I couldn't eat,
But I felt like Queen Victoria!

SWEET OLIVE

'Twas so long ago,— I almost disremember,—
But 'twas Spring; the orchard was in bloom!
I see her when the apple-buds are bursting;
She's with me when the breeze brings their perfume!

As I near recall, Olive was 'bout 'round twenty,
Though her hair she still wore then in curls;
She was always readin' books, an' never meddled
With the things that almost always interest girls!

We spent hours an' hours in that old apple-orchard;
Seldom spoke a single blessed word.
Did some one say *that* was the test of friendship?
Or maybe we jus' thought it; have you heard?

I used to suffer when folks called her
"Tom-Boy"
'Cause she fished an' hunted grouse with me;
She was natural-girl, if God e'er made one,
But country-folks know, too, that jealousy!
Yes, she went away. She took sick in December,
An' left us, must have been some time in May:

I only know the orchard was a-bloomin';
And we laid her there, jus' where she wished to
lay.

The Spring is holy! — No, I've never married.
I take it little Olive was for me.
So I've never even looked upon a woman,—
But when the orchard blooms, she *lives* with me!

SUFFERIN' YET

OLD SQUIRE VIM, of Burdock Farm,
Took the *Beetleville Review*,
An' read it faithful, every word,
An' the advertisin' through!

One day the Squire (a widower)
Read o'er a line like this:
"I want to meet a widower;
One not ashamed to kiss."

He read it o'er, and o'er again;
An' wondered what it meant!
"Will answer any one," it said,
"Most, who will pay the rent."

The Squire had plenty, it was said,
Though held it purty tight!
He hitched up, anyhow, and went
Into the town that night.

She seemed to want so little,
This woman must be good:
An' he was tired o' messin' food,
An' choppin' of the wood.

— But Burdock Farm no mistress knows;
The Squire is alone yet!
For he demanded just one thing,—
He'd wed no suffragette!

“ Whatever faults a wife may have,
No wife o’ mine, you bet,
Can vote to run the country,
Nor me example set!

“ I’d sooner close up shop, and nail
A big sign up, ‘ To Let,’
Than trust my victuals, entrails too,
To a bloomin’ Sufferin’ Yet!”

FETCHIN' HER HOME

WE hitched the old mare to a tree,
An' waited fur the train
That had been due since half-past-two;
'Twas four, an' pourin' rain!

Lucinday's boy was comin' home,
An' fetchin' 'long his bride.
The hull place knew it, so it seemed;
They'd come from fur an' wide!

Lucinday stayed to hum today,
An' sent us, every one:
She had to set the place to rights;
Her bread, it wasn't done.

But us who know Lucinday well
Allowed she thought it best
To see her bran' new darter
First, away from all the rest.

The gal Pete chose out fur his wife
They say's a social queen;
He sent a picter hum to us,—
Gran', like you never seen!

Lucinday's skeered she won't like us;
But I jus' says to her,
If she's picked Pete from all the rest,
There's none can beat her fur!

An' if she's taken *him* fur *hern*,
An' liked Pete that a-well,—
I guess she'll like his Pa an' Ma,
An' stay with them a spell.

Yo' see, a boy can't never be
No better than his folks!
An' Pete will always be our boy
Though with a queen he yokes!

He writ us that! you bet he did.
Well,— here comes Number Eight!
Jus' brush that buggy off a bit,
An' set the mare's hat straight!

NO SET RULE

THREE gals old Quaker Ellis had,—
Truly, an' Hope, an' Joy;
(He took to bed with a pain in his head
'Cause the last one wa'n't a boy.)

He fetched 'em up, as Quakers do,
Never to sin, or cheat, or fear;
But how folks plant pa'snips
An' get mustard-greens,—
Well, it certainly is queer.

All good in the gals, for the most part,
Was inherited strictly from him;
The bad, from the mother's side o' the house;
Her father was an old limb!
(At least Quaker Ellis said it;
To dispute him the chance was slim.)

"Truly" grew up to tell such lies
As never were told on earth;
"Hope" was sullen an' backward,
And fretful,— of little worth;
But "Joy" was the sorrow of Quakers,
Whose teachin' she gave wide berth!

"Now, what's in a name?" says Ellis.
"An' what's in the breed?" says Ma.
"There never was such a raisin' by hand
An' brain — never!" says Pa.

There's no set rule that is certain,
A-raisin' a brat or a cow;
But Ellis says: "Boys are better
An' easier raised, anyhow!"

THE PROOF

JOSH TITCOMB got religion
An' stood up in the pew
A-claimin' saints had saved him;
Henceforth his sins were few.

It all come of a sudden;
There want no time to think!
The preacher took Josh to the creek,
Right straight down to its brink,

Believin' if he took him at
His word, an' saved him then,
It wouldn't give Josh any time
To change his mind again.

Before they doused the bran-new clothes,
Josh's wife had bought for him,
He agitated on the woe
Of life, an' all its sin!

Maria stood transfixed an' pale,
A-listenin' to her mate
Declaim how Satan loved the world,
An' lurked in sinful state.

At last his wife could stand no more
(She'd been his twenty years,
An' furnished both the bread an' meat,—
Washed down with salty tears!).

So speakin' out,— as women will,—
She begged to have a word
Before immersion “ took ” on Josh,
She asked that she be heard.

“ If this day changes all of life,
An' makes it sweet fur me,
Jus' get his promise on the spot,
His woman he'll set free!

“ The minds of men are like the winds,—
They vary with the skies;
An' any man's religion's changed
By a woman's pair o' eyes!

“ No use to duck him, Preacher,
Or shrink that suit o' clothes;
Unless Josh means to give up *her*,—
He's lyin' the Lord knows!”

THE MISTS

JAKE's father was an optimist;
He hadn't any sense;
On Sundays allus went to church,—
Week days, collected rents
But Jake, he is a pessimist!
You ought to hear him spiel!
He says there ain't no life but this,
An' it's more woe than weal!
Jake's father allus stayed to hum;
He loved the country air;
But Jake has been across the pond
An' traveled everywhere!
The folks say Jake is awful smart,
An' eddicated, too;
I s'pose that brains must go with that
Air pessimistic view!

TENDIN' THE AUCTION

“THEY'RE sellin' Hiram out today;
The sheriff's seized the place.
Hi told me at the store jus' now
With powerful solemn face!

“ ‘ I guess 'twill pay you to drive down,
An' bid on them two calves,—
Your wife's so set on havin' 'em;
The price's cut in halves
When folks is sold out 'gainst their will!

“ ‘ Leastways, 'twill do no harm,
If you an' Liza want the calves,
To drive down to the farm
A little past two by the clock.
An' say,—'twill help me out;
I'm in the durndest mess this time,—
An' way in to the snout! ' ”

“ ‘ So, Ma, jus' put yer bonnet on
An' drive with me to town;
I'm goin' to pay the mortgage off
Fur Hi, an' then go 'roun'
An' wait till Sheriff Bob starts in,
An' hand the paper up
That'll save Hi's place, his stock an' all.
Gad-up, Betsy! . . . Gad-up!

“ Yo’ see, the young ones never came
To bless our old gray years,
But Hi an’ Susan’s had a score
That should have spared ’em tears!

“ I take it that the Lord’s been good,
An’ poured joy in our cup
Enough to help out Hi an’ Sue. . . .
Gad-up, Betsy! Gad-up!”

A COWSLIP'S SLIP

STEVE hated the farm.
He'd come to loathe even the meller-eyed cows.
He'd set by the hour 'neath the old willow-
 boughs,
An' plan to escape (from himself).

So sellin' a parcel o' land
 On a shelf by the sea,
Steve closed up his ranch
 An' come to see me!

When a boy gets to moonin',
 An' spoonin' the gals,
He *needs* change o' pasture,—
 Yes, even new pals!
'Twas this that ailed Steve.

So takin' his leave of the place,
 “Meadow-Clover,”
He came to New York
 Jus' to look the gals over!

Steve was brown-haired and thin:
One of them wimmin's dimples
 Stuck in his chin.
He blushed like a girl!
He was fine an' high-strung;
An' his heart was a harp by a tender thread
 hung.

The place was alive
 With young squabs and chicks,
Full o' ginger and pranks
 And city-gal's tricks,
And Steve was that green,
Being so tall an' slim,
I wondered the heifers
Hadn't grazed off'n him!

One night Steve was late;
It was most half-past-two.
I feared for his safety,
Between me an' you.

The dawn broke; 'twas sunrise;
Still no sign of Steve.
The city's so wicked
(Brush that tear from my sleeve)
Plum worried I was, you better believe!

At breakfast the bell rang,
An' hurried feet fell;
A uniformed officer stood at the bell.

"I've brought back your cowslip,
An' I'll give you a tip; —
'There's many a slip twixt the cup and the
 lip!'"

. . . An' he handed out Steve . . .
. . . From a hack at the door,

So battered, an' bruised, an' swollen, an' sore!
As he said, " Now, good day; go your way.
But with this broken arm
You won't be much use till the fall, on the
farm!"

Steve told me this yarn:
On one of the streets of the old Tenderloin
(Where rare things like Steve get robbed of
their coin)
He saw two big bullies
Molest a young girl,
An' beat her, and kick her,—
An' entered the whirl,
An' struck 'em!

When one hauled him into a den,
An' glory! if the police hadn't saved him just
then,
" Meadow Clover " would never have seen Steve
again!

Steve says he'll go home;
He longs to get back.
He's parted with all of his roll an' his stack!
For those who will stand for a city life, let 'em!
If thugs haven't got, they may one day yet,
Get 'em!"

MARY-JANE

“ I PRIZED Mary-Jane as a gift frum heaven,
An’ though we had children (we’ve had seven),
I’d ruther have laid ’em all away
Than to face the loss I face today!

“ You hear so much of inconstancy,
An’ disgruntled women recently;
But that’s one thing that I can say,
Now Mary-Jane has passed away:
There wa’n’t no time in our married life
That she wa’n’t a good, quiet, gentle wife.
She never read books! nor wanted to roam;
But was satisfied with her work at home.
She never wished idly for finery;
But was a helpmate, an’ glad to be.

“ Oh, dear, dear me, I can’t see how
That mortgage’ll ever git lifted now! ”

LEAST A TRY

STEVE asked my advice,
An' said he was willin' to leave it to me.
He'd be'n up to Bentville too much recently,
An' the fellers were guyin' an' winkin', I see,
So I 'sposed 'twas a gal.

Wal,— was he in earnest?
Oh, yes,— yes — sir — *ee*.
An' he driv every question (at least ninety-
three)
Thet a feller could ask about wimmin,
At me.

Trimmin' Steve down (as he left it to me),
I asked him a few, between me an' you.
Did he expect to be married, an' free?
Was he tight over money as bark on a tree?
An' was he in love? (Fur you see,
Steve had left it to *me*.)

'Twas 'cause he was lonely;
Too much freedom knew;
There wa'n't much in winter a farmer could do.
He couldn't be dubbed any spender;
Still she should have hers,— he'd defend her.
As fur bein' in love
(An' here Steve dissembled),—
He only knew this: when he kissed *her*,
He trembled.

“ Go ahead, Steve,” says I,
(An’ I looked in his eye)
“ Go ahead, an’ God *help* you :
The least you can give is a *try*.”

COLD-STORAGE

BE sparin' o' praise to your wimmin-folk;
Don't let 'em furget the marriage yoke!
There's many a wife gits the upper hand,
An' bosses a man an' owns his land,
Becuz he started right straight in wrong,
An' praised his wife as he went along!

To keep a woman in her place,
You have to wear a sullen face;
No matter what happens that's fit to laud,
Don't *never* praise 'em; never applaud.
If you'd keep a woman in her place,
Don't dress her up in lawn an' lace;
An' don't let on that she *could* please!
(What's in cold-storage is *bound* to freeze).

STEVE'S BREAK-AWAY

STEVE slipped into town.
His wife had gone down
To visit her maw ;
An' Steve took the chance,—
The first one he saw,—
To stretch his poor wings,
Tied up by such strings
As marriage an' houses
An' all of such things
As a man *will* take on him, fur life !

Steve's wife was the likeliest gal
That Steven could find. But she wasn't no pal,
Although she was kind.
To wean Steve away
From the lights an' the glare,
An' carry him off to a jail anywhere,
No woman e'er lived who could do it !
If she tried, she would certainly rue it.

Steve had jogged along stiddy
For ten months or so,
And set aroun' evenin's, nor offered to go
Where he couldn't take Kit ;
But those long, tethered months,— they made
Steven fit
For most any old thing when he broke away
From the post ! And fur Steven, this was the
day !

Ten months ain't so long, if you say it right
quick;
But Steve had stuck close,— an' he want born
to stick.
That's the whole o' the matter,— right straight
up an' down,—
Steve would have broke ten hearts, but he'd git
in to town!

I argue there's some men that's born to be tied,
An' no one could drive 'em from hum if they
tried.

These are as domestic as Tabby, I vow;
If they hadn't their comfort, they'd purr any-
how!

Then there's cats that's like Steven;
They wander fur fair!
Except times fur feedin',
They never *are* there!
They're mangy, an' battered,
One-eyed an' all that,
This specie of mankind
That's jus' like this cat.

Yes, it's hard on the wimmin, I must confess.
They all have their troublesome lives, more or
less!
But when God made the beautiful garden o'
flowers

Which is so like the wimmin in this world o' ours,
He made a bouquet of varieties many,
An' yer favorite flower, if you can pick any,
Needn't shut the whole garden abloom out o'
sight!

If you choose a rose, there's a lily, all white,
A-waitin' fur some one,—
An' good enough, quite!
But you can't have both lily an' rose, it is true,
Unless the old Nick's got a firm hold on you!

UP TO MIKE

THE baby's cum down to Cy's place.
He says it's got a purty face,
An' seems to look some like its mother ;
But it's a girl. He hoped he wouldn't have
another.

This makes five girls. An' Cy, he said
The Lord must have a feather bed
Jus' full o' girls thet was his lot.
A boy he wants,— but it was not.

There's one thing thet I can't see through.
If doctors do all thet they do,
Why can't we have jus' what we like,—
A boy or girl? Do you see, Mike?

SAM'S CHANCE

“ ’Twas more ’an twenty years ago
This comin’ month, since Sam
Rebuilt the oldtime homestead here,
An’ stopped the mill-creek’s dam,

“ Expectin’ nevermore to work,
But rest an’ take his ease;
But these ’ere social women-folks,
They’re dreadful hard to please.

“ Sam made the place a palace sure,—
A hired man, an’ a girl;
But when she cum down frum Noo York,
She fetched a social whirl

“ With all their gew-gaws an’ fine airs;
An’ never did a thing
But eat an’ sleep an’ ‘entertain,’
An’ flash thet diamond ring

“ Sam’s mother left to be his wife’s
When she last made her will;
She left Sam, but she kept thet ring!
Si thinks she’s got it still.

“ The place has ben shut up an’ nailed
Nigh onto eighteen years;
They tell about a ghost that walks,
An’ sheds real human tears!

“ Sam took a chance, like all the rest!
He bragged, an’ called her ‘ pet ’;
But she was just a parasite
That et an’ slept an’ et.”

WHAT'S HAPPINESS?

WHAT'S happiness, you're askin' me?
There ain't none 'round, as I can see!
So you can't want me to describe
A member of the happy-tribe.
But jus' what's my idee?
I see; I see.

Wal,— happiness, it seems to me,
Is some illusive subtlety!
Some somethin', thet men never git,
Specially them thet hunts fur it.
It seems the folks of quality
Ain't found it more 'an you and me!

It does seem strange, I must confess,
Men seldom meet with happiness.
Nor have I talked with anyone
Who ever has, all said an' done.

True happiness is seldom found
Until we're underneath the ground
The Maker give to bless us all
With its sweet Summer, Spring, an' Fall!

Life's winter snows, an' wind that blows
Men let *them* freeze their hearts an' veins,
So, when they're past, there's not a flower
That's left to blossom 'neath spring rains!

I've never sought fur happiness;
I've just accepted what has came!
But that its face is little known,
It seems, by heck, a cryin' shame!

MISFITS

You'LL have to git up early an' set up late,
If you keep a wreck record of the married state.
In our little township by gee, thar's three
That hev gone to smash quite recently.
There's Ezra Buck an' his foreign bride
That Buck was braggin' of far an' wide;
She's ducked, an' shipped agin fur France;
They say she left him fur this new dance.

Then there's Bill McGee and his family.
There ain't no finer pedigree
In the world,—least not this country,—
Than Bill McGee's. They say the sprees
Up there on top the hill
Has cost him many a doctor bill.
An' that purty gal what married Sam
(An' fed him mostly on cold ham
'Cause she couldn't cook an' she wouldn't
cook),—
That gal was purty as a picter-book!
She's gone,—they say up to Noo York
Where the light ones drift at last like cork.
I ast where she was, las' nite, of Sam;
Said he "didn't know, or care a damn."

SKINEM AND COMPANY

OLD Skinem's on his job again:
He says that warfare's pangs an' pain
Has got to net him some big game.
But he would skin 'em jus' the same
Without the war fur an excuse;
He don't need war fur that abuse.

There ain't a thing at Skinem's store
That is the price it was of yore;
From taters up to plums has riz,
So no one can afford gin-fiz.
I carried home, right in one mitt,
A dollar's worth,— jus' think of it!

If Skinem's granddad was alive
(He made his, back in sixty-five),
They'd own a store like Marshall Field's,
An' bless the Kaiser fur the deals.
You say that Skinem has no health?
If he could git it like his wealth,
He'd swipe it off'n you an' me.—
Thank God some things is like they be!

WINGS

SHE was so tiny,— leetle mite of a thing;
Used to make me think of a gauzy wing!
I knowed she'd never live; she wa'n't for earth;
We said it first when she was cauled at birth.

She was so wise. That little girl knew things
We never found how she knew. We felt her
wings!
When she told her Ma, "I saw an angel here,"
We knowed she saw it; we didn't think 'twas
queer. .

Next mornin' when I fetched the milk-pail in,
An' saw 'twas cryin' Louisa had been,
I knowed what the angel had cum for; knowed
the rest:
I'd always felt she belonged to the saints;
An' I ain't surprised thet the Lord knows best.

DRESSED, UNDRESSED

THAT gal in front dressed in white gauze
Or bobinet, or tarlatan
(I never knew the names o' stuff!
An' anyhow, I am a man),—

She came down on the car with me;
An' men jus' broke their necks to see
Her get off at the corner there!
She's not a thing on she could spare.

If girls will dress, un-dress, like that,
An' walk the city thoroughfare,
It wa'n't so bad for *Godivey*,
For cause, to wear her suit o' hair!

I reckon if it was today,
There'd be no Peepin' Toms, I guess;
She'd scarcely draw a curious throng,
So many's out without a dress!

NACHERLY

NACHERLY, Jim expected praise,
When the day closed in
 An' the night fell down;
But 'tain't what Eliza give him;
She never bestowed no crown,
An' said they wouldn't fit *men's* heads,
For angels were *all female!*

So she hammered, an' knocked,
 An' chewed the rag,
Till Jim took to drinkin' ale,
An' loafin', an' never goin' home
So long as there was a place to go
That would take him in, an' let him be:
An' Jim wasn't fast; he was slow.

Nacherly Jim was just a boy
(Though the Book might read he was forty-
 five)
When they found him froze in a vacant lot,—
As sure as you're alive.

Well,— they took him
 Where,— they thought,—
 he *lived*;
An' a buxom wife cum to the door.
“ 'Deed he don't! That bat-eared bum,
I never saw before!”

Nacherly,— 'twas Eliza's way!
One o' them wimmin yo' can't bet on.
They took poor Jim down to the morgue
That mornin' jus' 'fore dawn!

Humless he lived, an' humless died,
With a wife, an' a brace o' kids!
Nacherly, 'tw'a'n't his lot in life;
But Jim went with the "*Skids!*"

BANKRUPT

STEVE got into debt.
He'd go on a spree, then come to see me,
An' say he got soused "to forget."

Forget? Forget what?
Steve's was a fair lot;
I'd sooner remember than to be a sot,—
But we all have our'n,
An' Steven has his,—like as not.

You see he was too young to marry;
He never had sown a wild oat,
Or had any sweethearts,—no nary;
He was tame as a meadow-lark's note.

Steve picked up a gal 'cause she loved him
An' swore that she couldn't live on
'Less Steven would love her an' wed her,
An'—the boy's heart an' soul's just in pawn.

He's dyin' fur love of some other
(Beats hell how cross-current love runs),
An' his wife,—why, she's gone to her brother,
Took with her their two little sons.

Steve says he's in debt, an' some bankrupt,
An' jus' to forget goes an' spree's;
Why, there he is now,—see him yonder,
Out there 'neath the mulberry trees?

Never marry a gal 'cause she loves you:
Never marry no gal 'less you're sure
That the rest of the world would seem bankrupt
'Less you got *her*,— you'd always be poor.

There's Steven,— but what can I tell you?
You're young, an' won't listen to me.
Jus' look at him soused full o' licker;
To forget, he's jus' dreamin' he's *free*.

BET-CHER-LIFE!

AIN'T got no sense; but an appetite
John D. would envy me!
Ain't got nothin'. Bloomin' broke!
But happy? — Gee!
As happy as can be!!
Ain't paid the rent; ain't got a cent;
Yes, got my pay,— but don't know where it
went!

Ain't this ole worl' grand?
It beats the band
How happy a feller can be! . . .
Naw, I ain't got no wife;
Not me! I'm *free*!
Bet-cher-life!

MUSH

“ LOVEY’S ” clasping “ Dovey’s ” hand
In the subway train;
“ Goo-goo ” making eyes at “ Pet,”
Fifty-on-the-wane!
“ Baby ” cooing gruel talk
In the shops,— on the board walk.
Just behind my opera chair
There’s another purling pair!
“ Freddie,” sitting in the park,
Arm ’round “ Maizie’s ” waist,
In the midst of winter-time
Surely is bad taste.
“ Algie ” in a taxi-cab,
Cuddled up in arms of “ Mab.”
Mush is spilling over
Everywhere one goes!
Girls will soon be wearing
Still a few less clothes!
If Grandma could come back to earth
And see the sights we see,—
What on earth would Grandma think
Of “ Goo-goo,” Mab and Me?

AN EPITAPH

OLD Gene Dare was a devil;
There ain't no smoothin' it o'er.
An' he was the spike-tail variety
That 'tends to hell's fire with a blower!

His wife was afraid of her life while he lived;
An' his young'uns? He scared *them* to death!
They died from the fear of a father's wrath;
While livin', they ne'er drew a happy breath!

He uttered no word, but just a growl,
An' a grunt, 'ceptin' an oath now an' then;
If there's a heaven for wolves, he's in it,
Now he's gone beyond folks' ken!

The neighbors, they cried for joy when he died;
An' the hull village was rid of a sore
An' festered old varmint,— all mighty glad
In their hearts that old Dare is no more.

THE GAME OF LIFE

A CHANCE to play the Game of Life
Will some day come your way;
But if your hand is minus trumps,
Oh, lack-a-day!
Can't see any way to win?
Take a desperate chance!
Use your brain-machine most up,
Playing it free-lance!
Then the last trick's on the board;
What's your final card?
Beat! As sure as you are born!
Lost the game, old pard.

PEDIGREES

ODDS-BODKINS! Zooks! Bejabbers!
With their old "family-tree!"
I'm interested in the woods
More than their pedigree!
The Popinjinks and Kitchensinks
Are brothers "'neath their skins";
And all the Is-es and Would-bes
Date back to Might-Have-Beens!

The pattern of the silver birch,
Ne'er made a maple tree!
The oak and pine and walnut
Compete our forestry!
The cherry, balsam, olive, elm,—
What fairer trees than these?
Odds-bodkins! Zooks! Bejabbers!
With Highjinks pedigrees!

PLAIN

SHE was just what she was ;
There wa'n't no pretendin' about her !
No falseness, deceivin', nor sham ;
Her mind was just like her appearin',—
Frank, honest, and free of flim-flam !

Most folks said she was plain ;
All I know is 'twas plain she was fine
And steadfast, high-souled and true.
If you're lookin' for one in a hundred,
I'd sure recommend her to you.

JAKE'S ESTIMATE

'Tis purty much the same old life,
No matter where you live it!
Born, edicated, gradjewated,
Marry, work, eat, sleep, and die.
The only difference is the lot
You're born in; what ye give it;
An' if you're in the hard-tack class
Or have riz to cream an' pie!

'Tis purty much the same old life,—
In Skeedunk or Japan;
An' livin' means jes' do yer best,—
The durndest best ye can!

THE PRICE

STANDIN' room is all that's left,
'Cept a box for four!
That will cost you twenty bucks,
Something less or more.
Will you? *Can* you? Have to! Do!
What a fellow ought to
Seldom cuts the ice;
Everybody's doing it,—
So we pay the price!

Health is gone; there's nothing left
'Cept a pile of rocks,
But a pile of wisdom's stored
'Neath rather scanty locks!
It has cost an awful lot,
Though we would, or we would not;
Do we? — Must we? — Made to! — Pay!
Keep the change! (We're nice.)
Ring the curtain down, by heck.
We will pay the price!

TWO TIMES ONE

Two times one make two:
This is the rule,
And 'tis the same in love
As 'twas in school.
Should you doubt 'tis true,
I would advise you,
If your \$ \$ \$ are few,
To get your 'rithmetic
Before you pick
The girl,— and stick
To multiplication!
Then you will learn
How in the nation
You made two one!
An' when your chum
Springs the same sum
Onto you,
When he's got it bad
(Have figures true!)
You just look sad
An' say you thought he knew
That two times one made two!

STEVE — PRODIGAL

YES, Steve has come home!
These fellers that roam,
Seekin' new pasture or some foreign loam,
They allus come back
If you leave 'em alone.

It's the strangest thing yet that I've made a
note of,
That a man can't be tied even though he's in
love.
Though the ministers forge every link known to
God,
A woman's bare shoulders must bend to this
rod!
Kit says that's the reason wimmin want their
votes:
'Tis not to wear breeches, but cease bein' goats
Fur the men who ain't fair to their fine wimmin-
folks!

Will it lighten this yoke? I dunno! Seems
too fur ahead!
But wimmin wont' give up this hope till they're
dead!

I incline some to their side. Men are bad as can
be.
If wimmin can better 'em, I'd like to see

'Em given the chance, now it seems to me.
But there's no use to claim that every abuse
Will be rectified then; or every excuse
Will be made for the men!

You know, you must know, there ain't nothin'
to it,—

A man can be led, but not driv up to it!
The archangels in heaven can't alter the truth
That when God made us men (us who are men,
forsooth),

'Twas to rule in the kingdom of heaven on
earth,

And the kingdom of love, where we're all of one
birth,

And to rule our own selves,— our passions and
vices,—

With the manhood born in us that needs no ad-
vices.

I don't claim when a woman is bound to a brute,
That no law should free her, or she should be
mute;

But there's no wimmin's *votes* can make men
out o' brutes,

No more than bass-drums could ever be flutes!

TILDY-ELLEN

MATILDA wants to buy a cow,
An' her an' John has had a row
About the kind o' cow she'll buy,
An' what she'll pay, an' reasons why.

She saved the money up herself,
An' hid it on the pantry-shelf,
By sellin' eggs an' garden-stuff;
But, then, it seems, that ain't enough,—
She's got to do jus' as *he* likes.

There'll always be rows,— yas, an' strikes,—
S'long as wives like Tildy-Ellen
'Ll pass theirs over without yellin'!

PROSPECTIN'

JAMES HAINE'S son cum hum today.
He says there ain't no sum could pay
Him to live in no city!
Says city-folks lack pity,
An' seem to be all fur theirselves!
He says in all his travelin' 'round,
There ain't no place as he has found
That ever was as good as home.
If folks that roam would cum to see
Things just exactly as they be,
An' how home's good enough, says he,
Men wouldn't sink with ships at sea!

He says there ain't no charity
Where men are herded up like cattle!
There's so much strife up there, an' battle,
To git the things to eat an' wear;
An' there's a premium on air,
Which just the rich can have, up there!

James Haine's son has turned out fair,
An' will with any here compare.
He prospected, an' looked 'round some,
An' wheeled an' turned agin back hum
Becuz he found there ain't no place
O'ercrowded, on the earth's broad face,
That's goin' to breed a healthy race!

A BLACK EYE

“WHAT give poor Maggie thet black eye?
Grace asked her, but she won't reply.
D'you suppose that brute she wed
Has struck that lick upon her head?
D'you suppose he'd dare to do it?
I'd like to know. He'd surely rue it.”

“Go slow now, Jake, fur heaven's sake.
You know Doc is a drunken rake;
An' she knew when she roped him in,
He wa'n't no lily, free from sin!
A man's a perfick right to do
With his own as he likes to do,
An' if she'll stan' fur knocks an' blows
A drunkard or a brute bestows,—
Wal, I dunno, as marriage goes,
Thet she's worse off than most I knows
Who don't git cuffed, but sure git licked! . . .
Jus' leave 'em be; 'most all are tricked.”

MISSIONARY WORK

Ain't never goin' to have no sense ;
Ain't never got enough ;
Ain't got no ideals chasin' me ;
Would sooner be a tough.

Ain't goin' to pray my way through life ;
Would rather tango,— see?
So all yer tears is wasted
If you're sheddin' 'em for me.
Ain't sayin' nuthin' 'bout yer prayers,
Fur they are yourn, b'gosh.
Don't bother me, but let me be ;
Stop talkin' all yer josh

'Bout edication bein' fine an' helpin' one through
life.

It's busted-up Ned Parson's home ; —
He'd an edicated wife.
She set an' read her books all day,
An' never done her part ;
While she was follerin' literachure
She lost Ned Parson's heart.

She thought her sense was in the lead,
An' scorned to look behind ;
A heart's a lump of human clay ;
No wings can make a mind.

So leave me be ; I'm what I am ;
An' life, it's sweet to me.
If bent on missionary-work,—
Go tackle the Chinees.

IN THE DISCARD

I SHORE do miss the old time folks
With all their pretty ways,—
The kind we knew before these flimsy,
Slashed-up, naked days.

I shore do think it scandalous
The way the wimmin dress,
An' as fur dancin',— it's the worst
That English could express.

I shore do love a modest girl
With old-time grace an' charm,
But these 'ere bang-up, brazen days
Are pilin'-up alarm.

If I'd a girl, or I'd a boy,
I'd worry so about 'em,
All life would be a worriment,
An' I'm glad that I'm without 'em.

For the way folks sing an' dance an' dress
Is so filled with temptation
That every place we go leads straight
Down to bow-wow demnation.

WHEN PA WAS YOUNG

WHEN Pa was young, he had to guess
What forms was like 'neath crinoline!
Land sakes! Gals never showed themselves
Like your girl does today,— an' mine!

Pa says that beaux ran chances great,
When they picked out their partners then!
Whate'er folks say, the present day
Of fashions 'zackly please the men.

Poor Ma looks awful cross at Pa,
Who's jined the oglers and the winkers;
She says no married man should go
Outdoors without a pair o' blinkers!

VICTORY

It's in you, Bill; you can make good!
Yer father was a man!
All things have been agin' you, Bill,
Since first when you began!
But that's no sign they'll always be;
Just talk this over now with me,
An' see right where we stan'!

Yer father never drank, yo' know;
His brain machine was clean!
His word was law, and his bond, too! —
The squarest man I've seen.
Yer father never sowed wild oats,
So never had to thrash 'em;
He never knew a chorus girl,
So wa'n't tempted to mash 'em.
Yer, father, Bill, was everything
A father ought to be;
Why *you're* so run down at the heel,
Bill, nobody can see!
A son of such a dad as your'n,
It's plain as it can be,
Can brace up any time, old man,
And win the victory!

HUNKEY DOREY

OLD Hunkey Dorey "cuts it out,"
An' says, "What's all this war about?
It makes no difference to me
What's gobbled up across the sea.
I lived in the past century,—
Made mine when darkies were set free.
There was some stealin'? — I should shout.
But say,— what's this 'ere war about? "

Now Hunkey Dorey's fist is shut;
He's a mean and stingy nut.
He's got his where 'twill grow an' thrive,
An' thanks his stars he is alive.
In "cuttin' down an' cuttin' out "
He is a miserly old lout.
He buy a paper? Never. Would sooner save
his cents.
So the news flies by him,— an' he hasn't any
sense.

He smokes his pipe an' drinks his stout
As newsboys "Wuxtry " loudly shout;
An' while folks hurry in an' out,
Asks, "What's this foreign war about? "

MARTHY-ANN'S STYLE

MARTHY-ANN was the talk o' the town!
She'd ben to Noo York, an' in fac' all around,
An' cum hum with suffrage idees
An' one o' them skirts
Slit up like men's shirts,
An' as tight as the bark on the trees,—
If you're askin' me!

Gee! She was some pippin
With her rippin' style.
The hoosiers, they eyed her,—
An', gosh, how they guyed her!
Bless Gawd, you could hear 'em a mile!
The preacher what comes to preach Sundays
from Sayville,
Allowed that no gal can be good that will
Dress in that style;
An' his text he took frum it,—
“The shame of our wimmin,
A-dressin' fur church,
Like they's goin' in swimmin'!”

So the durn style an' fashion
That Marthy fetched hum, got some lashin'
That will do the gals good!
For Si said if his'n
Should copy from Marthy,

He'd hide hisself off in the wood,
Or put her in pris'n!

So score one fur Sayville's young rector;
For the young gals he sure stands protector!

What! Marthy's horse-whipped him!
On the way hum from church!
Don't these wimmin beat h-ll
On their high suffrage perch!

KATYDID FARM

AT Katydid Farm, thirteen miles from the town,
They take summer boarders to keep losses down
An' run profits up, if you're askin' me!
City-folks sure get stung,—
And not from a bee!

Thirty-two, Marthy said, she counted in sight,
A-drinkin' skim-milk an' sleepin' outdoor at
night,
An' feedin' mosquitoes superfluous flesh;
They brought out to leave at Katydid Farm,
To go back to town with *less flesh an' more*
charm!

How they rave when the meaders are wavin' with
grain!
How they bluster about just a weed, gives me
pain!
The most on 'em ne'er saw a heifer before!
They balk, and they shy, an' they run from 'em,
shore!
But the best I've heard yet 'bout folks at the
farm,
Is the lonesome young miss they call the school-
marm:

No one seems to know her:
She wants to know none!

She rides, walks, *sets* alone, till day's over and
done!

She's writin' a book, or mebbe a play,—

Them writin'-folks always *is* queer, so they say!

She asked Cy a question today at the cove:

“ When a farmer's in love here, how does he
make love? ”

Cy's a skittish young stallion,—

Won't stand 'less he's hitched!

What he answered her, wish I knew, I'll be
switched!

Cy blushed when he told it,—

I recall that he did;

Cy's a lovin' young buck! —

Wal,— Cy's *only a kid*.

A SIGHT OR TWO

“TAIN’T so, ’tain’t so,” said farmer Pete,
While we were walkin’ down the street;
“All gals is just alike to me,
An’ purty they all seem to be.
But up here on Fifth Avenue
I note a bran new gal or two
I never see before
(Least, not in Hoosick Falls).

“I stan’ here in the tavern door
An’ look these fillies o’er and o’er,—
It’s show enuf fur me!
Las’ nite most every operry-stall
Held ladies with no clothes at all,
Who didn’t even seem to know
That of themselves they made a show.

“Now this gits me. In Hoosick Falls
Of course we have no operry-stalls
An’ no Fifth Avenue.
They fetch me here each year, my dear,
To git a sight or two.”

NARROWED DOWN

WHY, narrowed down, it cum to this,—
Hi expected too much frum wedded bliss,
Fur one so imperfick as Hiram Tree,
Shouldn't look fur compatibility
'Less he chose his kind,— to drink an' spree.
Would you set ducks on hens' eggs, by gee,
An' expect a brood like the settin'-thing —
Web o' foot an' blue o' wing?

Fur, narrowed down, they're of different name;
They may 'pear alike,— but are not the same!
Some things is *goin'* that ought to *came*,—
An' that's like this 'ere marriage-game.

FOR A TRUTH

'Tis nayther ye nor I can say
Just whin the war will end, colleen ;
It calls to mind that pesky day
I left yure Ma an' marched away
To the "Wearin' of the Green."

Ye were not born thin, my colleen ;
None braver than yure Ma so true.
Ye'd grown that high afore I'd seen
Me own young-one, — the loikes ov you.

'Tis brave are the lads that go to war,
And brave are the wives, that sthay at home ;
Many's the one shot down afar
From their heart,— and buried in alien loam.

'Tis I, who have heard the cursed shells
An' seen the blood-bespathered breast,
Can say for a truth that "war is hell,"
An' the peace of the wurld is best.

MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS

“ I’M just a human bein’, with his failin’s an’ his
sins ;

I’m not a Izzar or Would-Be,— one of the
Might-Have-Beens.

I don’t pretend I’m perfick. Don’t want none
to believe

That I’m a sheep in a saint’s coat, when the
goat-brand’s on my sleeve.

I’m jus’ a human bein’. An’ I thank the Lord
for this :

I’m not deceivin’ no one ; an’ my soul’s jus’ what
it is.”

FURGET IT!

If scandal-mongers drive you mad,
Or slighting friends would make you sad,—
Furget it!

Take in long breaths of good fresh air;
Let off the worry, spit out the care,—
Furget it!

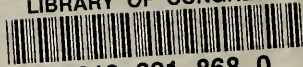
Think something that will cheer and soothe,
And watch your wrinkled brow grow smooth,—
Furget it!

If all the time you've thought you're it,
Your friends take in your sails a bit,—
Furget it!

Most fames and names are laid aside
When folks are given their last long ride!
Furget it!

O God, how bright the world would be
If others faults we could not see.
What heaven right here for you, for me,—
Could we — furget it!

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